

1991. Education and personal growth were immensely important values to Reverend Jackson. He truly used a lifetime of learning to inspire and teach others.

In his early pastoral career, Reverend Jackson acted as Interim Pastor to rebuild and develop transitioning churches in the Los Angeles area. He focused his passion for providing youth leadership and family services as Associate Pastor for Menlo Park Presbyterian Church from 1979 to 1983. Later that year, he joined Faith Presbyterian Church in Oakland, thus beginning 26 years of service to our community as Pastor and spiritual guide.

Along with wife Jimmie Jackson, with whom he celebrated 41 years of marriage this month, and daughter Rachel Jackson, Reverend Jackson maintained a dynamic presence in Bay Area community organizing. He was instrumental in organizing numerous collaborations and events including Support for the Families of Homicide Victims, a Community Health Fair Event, Embrace Oakland Day and Faith Network of the East Bay.

Reverend Jackson was passionate about encouraging collaboration between diverse groups. He utilized the clarity of his vision and the strength of his faith to unite people to work for shared goals. In 1992, Reverend Jackson was a founding pastor of the African American & Korean American Fellowship of Churches, a coalition that sought to build better racial relationships between communities of color. He also established the Themus Spencer Learning Center at Faith Presbyterian Church in partnership with Emerson Elementary School to guide at-risk students to academic success.

Deeply moved by the challenges of Katrina Relief in 2006, Reverend Jackson also helped organize a team of Oakland Pastors to raise relief funds during a citywide gathering at the Oakland Coliseum. Whether working with an interfaith coalition to rebuild burned black churches in Boligee, Alabama, or simply lending an ear to a friend in need—Reverend Jackson always made time to help others.

Additionally, he was a great lover of sports, earning his Black Belt in Korean Judo and serving as Chaplain for the Golden State Warriors Basketball Team and other pro- and college teams. In his later years, Reverend Jackson stayed active as trustee, co-chair or committee member for myriad organizations, even earning a Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary just last year.

Pastor Jackson was a personal friend and source of inspiration to me. Often times he would leave a prayer on my voicemail and his words of encouragement always came, "right on time." I will always remember the joy and excitement Reverend Jackson felt at the National Prayer Breakfast this year in Washington D.C., when along with Mrs. Jackson and Pastor and Mrs. Pinkard, he witnessed our President Barack Obama and First Lady participate in their first national prayer breakfast. This week, as I looked at the photos once again after learning of Reverend Jackson's untimely death, I was reminded of his kind and gentle spirit. His life was one lived in service to God.

Today, California's 9th Congressional District salutes and honors Reverend Frank Jackson. The contributions Reverend Jackson made to his community throughout his life are countless and precious. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and loved ones. Reverend Jackson will be deeply missed. May his soul rest in peace.

COMMEMORATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE

SPEECH OF

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 13, 2009

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the Hellenic Caucus, I rise today to congratulate the Daughters of Penelope on their 80th anniversary. I want to thank Representative MALONEY, my Hellenic Caucus co-chair for introducing this meaningful measure of which I am a proud original cosponsor. The Daughters of Penelope is a premier international women's organization and affiliate organization of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, the Nation's leading association of American citizens of Greek heritage and countless Philhellenes.

Founded November 16, 1929, in San Francisco, California, the Daughters of Penelope was established to improve the well-being of women and provide them with the opportunity to make significant contributions to American society. Today its mission is to promote the ideals of ancient Greece, education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, family, and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism.

Over its history, the Daughters of Penelope have achieved remarkable accomplishments. It has strengthened the status of women in society, sheltered the elderly and the abused, educated our youth, promoted Hellenic heritage, and raised funds for medical research.

One project adopted by the Daughters of Penelope over the years that is near and dear to my heart is St. Basil Academy, a Greek Orthodox Archdiocese home for children in need. Beginning in 1954, the Daughters of Penelope have been providing charitable aid to St. Basil Academy when it embarked on a Christmas Seal Campaign to raise funds to build the new water works for the academy. Since then, the Daughters of Penelope contributed to the furnishing of new buildings that have been built on campus, built a heated outdoor swimming pool for the children, and has provided funds for ongoing maintenance and renovations to the academy for such items as replacing outdated appliances and worn-out roofs.

Finally, Daughters of Penelope members exemplify the American dream. With their strong work ethic, Greek-American women have risen to become leaders in their respective professions, from government to business to the arts. I am honored to have a longtime member of the Daughters working in my district office. My dear friend, Sonja Stefanadis, has been a member of the Daughters of Penelope for 48 years and served as its national president in the early 80's. So, I know first hand the extraordinary work this wonderful organization does. It has been a vehicle through which this advancement has occurred in our society.

Congratulations to the Daughters of Penelope. I look forward to many, many years of working together with them.

THANKING COLONEL GENE BLADE FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. AARON SCHOCK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. SCHOCK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor COL Gene Blade, a great American who is retiring today after 55 years of service to his country and community.

Colonel Blade started his 40-year military career in 1954, when he joined the Illinois National Guard in Monmouth, Illinois. His first job in the Army was as a radio operator and Jeep driver for the Battery Commander. As his military career advanced, Colonel Blade served in numerous other positions, including Fire Support Officer and eventually Battery Commander. In fact, Colonel Blade held every key staff position in the infantry and artillery battalions, including Infantry Battalion Commander of the 1st Regiment, 123rd Infantry Battalion.

Colonel Blade continued to perform his duties even when no one expected him to do so. In one specific instance, Gene was hospitalized with pneumonia, but a group of top military personnel were scheduled to visit his post to view a demonstration of a nuclear spotter round. The weapons used for this exercise required very specific calculations, and Gene's expertise was needed for the test. Even with pneumonia, Colonel Blade decided to take part in the test and was transported via ambulance to the testing area so he could commence the demonstration. The event occurred without any problems, in fact, it was performed quicker than any previous test. After the demonstration, Gene was transported via ambulance back to the hospital. Gene's commitment to the Army was so evident, that the Army Chief of Staff personally thanked him for going above and beyond the call of duty.

After serving 40 years in the Army, Colonel Blade retired as a United States Property and Fiscal Officer for the Illinois National Guard and joined Hanson Professional Services Inc. as a special consultant, working with Department of Defense clients. Even in the private sector, Gene continued to serve his country. Using his skills and knowledge, he provided consulting services for 15 years and worked on several notable projects for the Illinois, Indiana, Florida, and Missouri National Guards.

Additionally, Colonel Blade has served on the U.S. Department of Defense's Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) for military bases in Illinois, and he continues to serve on the Governor's post-BRAC commission for future economic development efforts. He is also an active member and an employer outreach representative for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program.

Throughout his life and career, Gene's dedication and achievements have made a positive impact on the U.S. military, the State of Illinois, and our great Nation. Today, at 75 years of age, Colonel Blade will celebrate his retirement from Hanson. I'm told he looks forward to spending time golfing, traveling, woodworking, and also writing a book of his memoirs. I thank him for his service, and wish him the very best.